

THE LIFE DIVINE

On the surface we know only so much of
our
self as is formulated there and of even
this only a
portion; for we see our total surface
being in a
general vagueness dotted and sectioned
by points or
figures of precision: even what we
discover by a
mental introspection is only a sum of
sections; the
entire figure and sense of our personal
formation
escapes our notice. But there is also a
distorting
action which obscures and disfigures
even this
limited self-knowledge; our self-view is
vitiating by
the constant impact and intrusion of our
outer
life-self, our vital being, which seeks
always to make
the thinking mind its tool and servant:
for our vital
being is not concerned with self-
knowledge but with
self-affirmation, desire, ego. It is
therefore constantly
acting on mind to build for it a mental
structure
of apparent self that will serve these
purposes; our
mind is persuaded to present to us and
to others
a partly fictitious representative figure
of ourselves
which supports our self-affirmation,
justifies our
desires and actions, nourishes our ego.
This vital
intervention is not indeed always in the
direction of
self-justification and assertion; it turns
sometimes
towards self-depreciation and a morbid
and exag-

gerated self-criticism: but this too is an
ego-structure,
a reverse or negative egoism, a poise or
pose of the
vital ego. For in this vital ego there is
frequently
a mixture of the charlatan and
mountebank, the
poser and actor; it is constantly taking
up a role
and playing it -to itself and to others as
its public.
An organised self-deception is thus
added to an